

## “MIDDLE REPUBLICAN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT GOING TO SUB-DISTRICTS”

**The Middle Republican Natural Resources District** will be transitioning into sub-districts for their election of board members. These changes will be in effect for the 2016 election year. The MRNRD Board of Directors is currently an eleven person board all elected at large. The new set-up for this board will be a thirteen person board and will result in a major change in how members will be elected. This will be something that hasn't been looked at or changed for the last 20 years.

The addition of members helped create the sub-districts with a similar voting population. There will now be six different sub-districts with two members in each of them and one member elected at large. The two in each district will be elected by the population within that district. The one member that is elected at large will be voted on by the entire Middle Republican NRD.

The newly created sub-districts will be:

- 1) All of Frontier County
- 2) All of Hayes County and the southern portion of Lincoln County in the MRNRD boundary
- 3) All of Hitchcock County
- 4) Northwest portion of Red Willow County including an area of McCook
- 5) Southwest portion of Red Willow County including an area of McCook
- 6) Eastern portion of Red Willow County including an area of McCook
- 7) At-Large Member (entire MRNRD votes)

There will be an election for only one member in every sub district and for the at large position in the 2016 election, this is due to the fact the current board members will be serving out all of their terms. In recent years there has been such a high interest in the MRNRD board which has made it a very competitive election. This high interest has made the board a very diverse group which has made them very successful in their decisions.

The current board is working on several big and important projects. The board has several new studies on-going to figure how to make their decisions with more science based data. They have been and currently are working with the Frenchman Valley Irrigation District to use their irrigation delivery system to study the effects and benefits of recharging groundwater. The board is also trying to get a new irrigation efficiency project off to a good start which will offer full service irrigation monitoring and scheduling.

They also put together, with the help of NRCS, a project to apply for additional funds through the Ogallala Aquifer Initiative Fund for producers here in the MRNRD to use for a voluntary implementation practice to conserve irrigation water and improve groundwater quality. The Board was successful with this project in getting another sum of around \$750,000.00 to the area that hadn't been planned on. At the end of the day the MRNRD board works to assist in any way possible to accomplish things such as conserving, sustaining, and improving our natural resources and environment.

Natural Resources Districts are unique to Nebraska because they are governed by locally elected boards and Nebraska is the only state in the union to have this system. A handful of board members, managers and staff have been a part of the NRD system since the NRD was created back in 1972. There are 23 NRD's in the State of Nebraska. These districts were created to solve flood control, soil erosion, irrigation run-off, and groundwater quantity and quality issues. Nebraska's NRD's are involved in a wide variety of projects and programs to conserve and protect the state's natural resources.

NRD's are local government entities with broad responsibilities to protect our natural resources. Major Nebraska river basins form the boundaries, enabling districts to respond best to local needs. Elected boards of directors govern districts. Much of the funding comes from local property taxes. NRD's help Nebraskans respond to natural resource challenges with local control and local solutions. The Board of Directors has built a partnership with other agencies and organizations, including the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission, Nebraska Department of Natural Resources and other state and federal agencies, municipalities, counties and private organizations.

Many NRD projects produce long lasting results: dams, terraces, drainage ditches, windbreaks, reservoirs and recreational ideas. NRD's are unique to Nebraska, a state which has a long history of political innovation including the nonpartisan, single house legislative and total public power. In the past 40 years, NRD's have experienced tremendous growth in the responsibilities give to them by state statute, especially in protecting groundwater. With information, education and outreach efforts, NRD's also touch Nebraska's future generations, the young people who will watch over the state's resources in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

If you are interested, take a look at the sub-district boundaries and consider running for a position on the Middle Republican NRD Board. The deadline for running in 2016 is February 16, 2016 for incumbents and March 1, 2016 for new candidates. If you have any questions you can check out the MRNRD website which is [www.mrnrd.org](http://www.mrnrd.org) or call the MRNRD office at 308-367-4281 and ask for Jack or Sylvia.

